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## THE LIBERTINES: 'THERE ARE NO INNOCENT BYSTANDERS' REVIEW

ABITHA PALLETT FEBRUARY 28, 2012 1 COMMENT



Abitha Pallett checks out The Libertines new film ahead of release. Check out her exclusive review here..

There Are No Innocent Bystanders is endearingly constructed under the direction of legendary photographer and longtime fan Roger Sargent. It follows the renowned arcadians, The Libertines, as they reunite for a string of high-profile gigs in 2010. Accompanied by Sargent's iconic imagery, Pete Doherty, Carl Barat, John Hassall and drummer Gary Powell recount the band's harrowingly depressing tale of wasted opportunities, abject dives and dissipated talents.

Doherty and Barat to and fro between snide swipes and affection, with their on-off friendship plagued by Pete's well known drug habits. Doherty states: 'I became warped by the lack of power we ended up having. I was a mess really when it came to fame.'

In the large part, this documentary is about 'the resurgence of that paranoia state', as can be seen in scenes showing Doherty arriving late to rehearsals – when he's not too jaded to attend at all. Barat becomes increasingly frustrated by his friend's inconsistency, while Hassall explains, 'Pete was frustrated that not enough people were taking charge of the band. I think he felt isolated by that.'

With a solemn tone, Barat summarises, 'For whatever reason, I felt Pete wasn't serving Albion properly' But, he says, 'Retrospectively, I wouldn't have done anything different...I don't think I'll ever have a songwriting partner as special as Peter.'

Hassall agrees. 'The Libertines reunion was a chance for me to get back with heroes,' he says.

This documentary tells the story of The Libertines from the viewpoint of the band themselves, incorporating iconic photography and footage from rehearsals, gigs and favourite Libertine haunts such as 489 Holloway Road, an old brothel turned rehearsal space. The exclusive footage is a real treat.

Most of the attention is inexorably focused on Doherty and Barat but, as Powell relevantly remarks, 'If Pete and Carl weren't as charming as they were, we wouldn't have gained notoriety as quick as we did... There was always a kind of division between the four of us.'

The climax features a squiffy set at Reading & Leeds before ending with the poetic declaration that the band were 'as pure as the driven snow and there was nothing like it'. To be fully appreciated, this film should be viewed with at least some pre-existing knowledge of the Libertines' notorious and colourful

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should be viewed with at least some pre-existing knowledge of the Libertines' notorious and colourful history. But hardcore fans will love it, too.

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"Oh what became of the likely lads? Oh what became of the dreams we had?" Interesting review, as a previous hardcore Libertines fan I'll definitely have to check it out. Good one.

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